

**Functional Series 400
Personnel**

INTERIM UPDATE 02-12

SUBJECT: Washington, D.C., Area Emergency Dismissal or Closure Procedures

NEW MATERIAL: This notice is issued annually to USAID/W employees to provide instructions and information on emergency dismissal or closure procedures for adverse weather conditions and other emergency situations.

SUPERSEDES: Series 400 Interim Update 01-11, Washington, D.C., Area Emergency Dismissal or Closure Procedures

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/03/2002

POLICY

**USAID/General Notice
M/HR/PPIM/PP
12/03/2002**

Subject: Washington, D.C., Area Emergency Dismissal or Closure Procedures

This notice is issued annually to USAID/W employees to provide instructions and information on emergency dismissal or closure procedures for adverse weather conditions and other emergency situations. While these procedures do not apply to the field, Mission Directors are advised to prepare for such contingencies and to develop appropriate emergency dismissal or closure procedures in coordination with the embassy.

The following emergency procedures are in accordance with guidelines issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. These procedures apply in situations that prevent significant numbers of employees in the Washington, D.C., area from reporting to work on time or which require agencies to close all or part of their activities. Employees are expected to adhere to these general procedures unless instructed otherwise.

This notice supersedes USAID/General Notice dated December 5, 2001. These procedures do not apply to an Agency shutdown due to a lapse in appropriations.

1. Emergency Procedures

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will notify the Director, Office of Human Resources (M/HR), of any decision to close Federal agencies, any announced "unscheduled leave" or "delayed arrival" policy, or any decision to dismiss Federal employees before the close of the normal workday using the "early dismissal" policy.

In the event of an early dismissal during normal work hours, the responsible Administrative Management Staff (AMS) will notify employees in their Bureaus/Offices as soon as they receive official notification from M/HR. When OPM makes a decision before employees report to work, the local media will be notified.

a. When Emergencies Occur Before the Workday Begins

OPM will provide one of the following five announcements to the media when an emergency occurs before the workday begins. These announcements do not apply to individuals who are designated as "emergency employees." Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time unless excused by their supervisors.

The media will announce OPM determinations as follows:

(1) "FEDERAL AGENCIES IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA ARE OPEN; EMPLOYEES ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT FOR WORK ON TIME."

This announcement means that employees are expected to report for work on time.

Supervisors should be as flexible as possible in approving annual leave or leave without pay (LWOP) for employees who face emergency situations or other hardships (e.g., when schools/child care centers open late or are closed).

(2) "FEDERAL AGENCIES IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA ARE OPEN UNDER AN UNSCHEDULED LEAVE POLICY."

This announcement means that employees who cannot report for work may take unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday. However, employees must inform their supervisor if they plan to take annual leave or LWOP. If an employee fails to report for work and has not informed the supervisor of the employee's plans to take leave, the supervisor may charge the employee absence without leave (AWOL).

Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.

(3) "FEDERAL AGENCIES IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA ARE OPEN UNDER A DELAYED ARRIVAL POLICY. EMPLOYEES SHOULD PLAN TO ARRIVE FOR WORK NO MORE THAN ## HOURS LATER THAN THEY WOULD NORMALLY ARRIVE."

This announcement means that employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than ## hours later than they would

normally arrive. Employees who arrive for work more than ## hours later than their normal arrival time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work.

Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.

(4) "FEDERAL AGENCIES IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA ARE OPEN UNDER A DELAYED ARRIVAL/UNSCHEDULED LEAVE POLICY. EMPLOYEES SHOULD PLAN TO ARRIVE FOR WORK NO MORE THAN ## HOURS LATER THAN THEY WOULD NORMALLY ARRIVE, AND EMPLOYEES WHO CANNOT REPORT FOR WORK MAY TAKE UNSCHEDULED LEAVE."

This announcement means that employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than ## hours later than they would normally arrive. Employees who arrive for work more than ## hours later than their normal arrival time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work.

Employees who cannot report for work may take unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday. Employees must inform their supervisors if they plan to take annual leave or LWOP.

Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.

(5) FEDERAL AGENCIES ARE CLOSED.

This announcement means that employees not designated as emergency employees (including employees who telecommute at an alternative worksite) are excused from duty without loss of pay or charge to leave.

Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.

Workdays on which a Federal activity is closed are non-workdays for leave purposes. Employees who are on approved leave before the closure must be granted excused absence. This does not apply to employees on LWOP, military leave, suspension, or in a non-pay status on the workday before and after the closure. These employees are not entitled to excused absence and should remain in their current status.

Employees on the Flexible 5/4-9 Alternative Work Schedule who are not scheduled to work on the day of the closure are not entitled to another AWS day off "in lieu of" the workday on which the Agency is closed. (For further information, refer to "Guidelines for Implementation of New Flexible 5/4-9 Work Schedule," dated January 21, 1998.) These "Guidelines" are

posted on the "Work/Life Programs" Webpage of the Office of Human Resources Website (M/HR).

b. When Emergencies Occur After the Workday Begins

OPM will provide the following announcement when an emergency occurs after the workday begins.

"FEDERAL AGENCIES IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA ARE OPERATING UNDER AN EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY. EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE DISMISSED BY THEIR AGENCIES ## HOURS EARLIER THAN THEIR NORMAL DEPARTURE TIME FROM WORK."

In such situations, OPM will notify the Director, Office of Human Resources (M/HR), of an emergency dismissal during the workday. The responsible Administrative Management Staff (AMS) will inform employees of their Bureau/Office as soon as they receive official notification from the Office of Human Resources (M/HR).

Employees should be dismissed relative to their normal departure times from work. For example, if a 3-hour "early dismissal" policy is announced, employees who normally leave their offices at 4:00 p.m. should leave at 1:00 p.m. Employees who must leave work earlier than their official dismissal time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay from the time of their departure through the remainder of their scheduled workday.

However, supervisors may excuse an employee without loss of pay or charge to leave (i.e., grant a reasonable amount of excused absence) to avoid hardships. For example, excused absence may be granted to employees who need to leave before the employee's authorized time of dismissal because younger children are released from school or child care centers earlier than the announced dismissal time and no alternative forms of child care are available. However, employees have no entitlement to excused absence.

Employees on previously approved leave (annual leave, sick leave or leave without pay) should be charged leave for the entire workday.

This announcement does not apply to individuals who are designated as emergency employees. Emergency employees are expected to remain at work unless instructed otherwise.

2. Office Coverage and Emergency Employees

OPM guidelines require agencies to designate "emergency employees." These employees are expected to report for or remain at work in emergency situations, including emergency dismissals and closures (other than shutdown due to a lapse in

appropriations, in which case other guidance will govern who is to report to and/or remain at work), unless they are instructed otherwise. Employees who telework at an alternative worksite may also be designated as emergency employees. USAID's emergency employees include the Agency Duty Officer and Bureau/Office Duty Officers, as designated weekly by A/AID-ES.

In addition, certain circumstances may necessitate that an Assistant Administrator or Head of an Independent Office designates a limited number of employees as emergency employees to support a specific emergency action. For example, should an international disaster occur at a time when only emergency employees are required to report to work, the Assistant Administrator for DCHA may designate that the staff or a task force, which is assigned to support the disaster relief effort, are emergency employees for the duration. Such a decision must be documented in writing and conveyed to the designated employees in writing.

In addition, a limited number of employees may be necessary in an emergency situation to maintain the safe operations of the USAID/W physical plant and for other critical administrative operations. The Assistant Administrator for Management or the responsible Head of an Independent Office will designate these employees as emergency employees, and they will be notified in writing of this designation.

Supervisors are encouraged to post a copy of these guidelines in the office where employees may refer to them. These guidelines will also be posted on the "Leave Administration" Webpage of the Human Resources (M/HR) Website.

Point of Contact: Inquiries regarding this notice may be directed to Joann Jones, M/HR/PPIM/PP, on (202) 712-5048.

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